

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Deadline Extended for Workers Impacted by the Southern California Wildfires to File for Disaster Unemployment Assistance

SACRAMENTO – The deadline for filing for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is now being extended to allow workers who lost their jobs or were unable to get to work due to the disastrous wildfires that plagued Southern California in October. The new timely filing period deadline is January 9, 2008.

The original filing deadline for DUA claims related to the fires was November 26. But the California Employment Development Department, which administers the DUA program in California along with the regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, requested an extension on the timely DUA claim filing period from the U.S. Department of Labor last week.

“We have a great deal of sympathy for all of our Southern California neighbors struggling to put their lives back together following the destruction of the October wildfires,” said EDD Director Patrick Henning. “We feel it’s important to provide adequate time for these weary victims to apply for and receive as much government assistance as possible in their recovery efforts.”

EDD requested the deadline extension in the event many workers impacted by the tragedy did not have ample opportunity to apply for DUA benefits. As of Friday, November 23, more than 6,800 fire-related UI claims, including DUA claims, have been filed with EDD.

While DUA is similar to regular Unemployment Insurance in benefit amounts and duration, eligibility is somewhat different. Those eligible for DUA include people affected by the disaster who have a legal right to work in the United States, who are or have been self-employed, or who are unable to establish a valid regular UI claim; or individuals who have exhausted their regular UI claim benefits. People unable to reach work because of the disaster; those scheduled to begin work that was terminated because of the fires; and people physically unable to work because of a disaster-incurred injury may also be eligible for DUA benefits.

The fastest and easiest option for people to file claims for UI and DUA benefits is on-line at www.edd.ca.gov/fleclaim.htm. Claimants can also file via the telephone numbers listed below:

English..... 1-800-300-5616
Spanish..... 1-800-326-8937
Cantonese..... 1-800-547-3506
Mandarin..... 1-866-303-0706
Vietnamese..... 1-800-547-2058
TTY (non-voice)..... 1-800-815-9387

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